

REMARKS

This is in full and timely response to the above-identified Office Action. The above listing of the claims supersedes any previous listing. Favorable reexamination and reconsideration are respectfully requested in view of the preceding amendments and the following remarks.

Claim amendments/Status

In this response, claims 1 and 7 have been cancelled, claims 3, 5 10 and 12 have been written to assume independent form; claim 2 amended to depend from claim 3; claim 6 amended to depend from claim 5; claims 8 and 9 amended to depend from claim 10 in independent form and claim 13 amended to depend from claim 12 in independent form. Inasmuch as claims 3-6 and 10-13 have been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, it is submitted that the above amendments place the instant application in *prima facie* condition for allowance.

Rejections under 35 USC § 102/103

The rejection of claims 1, 2 & 8 under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Okuda (JP 2003-302116 A, Machine Translation) and the rejection of claims 7 and 9 under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Okuda in view of Ishii (JP 2003-083634 A, Machine Translation), are respectively rendered moot by the above amendments.

All objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application should be in condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Early issuance of a Notice of Allowance is courteously solicited.

The Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned, Applicant's attorney of record, to facilitate advancement of the present application.

To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 11-0219 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,
LOWE HAUPTMAN HAM & BERNER, LLP

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Kenneth M. Berner".

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